

**THE SCHOOL SUPPORT REPORT
THE SMITHFIELD SCHOOL DEPARTMENT**

OCTOBER 15-23, 2001

SCHOOL SUPPORT SYSTEM

Introduction

The purpose of the School Support System (SSS) is to provide a means of accountability for delivery of programs and services for students with disabilities. The School Support System model is designed to promote the involvement of the whole school district, regular educators as well as special educators and parents. It is designed to learn if the district meets the minimum regulations and what effects the programs and services have on student performance. Finally, the SSS develops a support plan for training and technical assistance.

To accomplish this the SSS includes these components:

- **The Orientation Meeting** The Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) staff meets with the Local Education Agency (LEA) to plan the site visit and identify issues or initiatives that may influence programs or service delivery.
- **Data Analysis Meeting** The RIDE staff meets to review LEA demographic information on selected reports including: the LEA annual plan, census information, and information collected through record review, staff questionnaires and parent interviews. To ensure that the child is at the center of the study, all analyses begin with the child. Thus, a sample of approximately 30 students with disabilities is selected; the records of these students are reviewed; their parents, teachers and related service providers are interviewed, and their classrooms are observed. The result is an in-depth, unified examination of the actual provision of programs and services for students with disabilities. The RIDE staff compiles a preliminary summary of their analyses of these data.
- **Presentation by the LEA and School Site Visit** The site visit begins with a presentation of programs by teachers and staff. The presentation provides the visiting team with general and specific information on delivery of programs and services to students. Following this presentation, visits to all schools are made. The team members interview school administrators and teaching staff. Parents and central office staff are also interviewed. the team gathers sufficient information and works with the LEA personnel to generate a report covering the following:
 - The district's compliance with the state and federal regulations, relative to the education of students with disabilities
 - The quality and effectiveness of programs and services provided by the district
 - The need for professional development and technical assistance that will enable the LEA to improve programs and services.
- **The Support Plan** The RIDE team and the LEA central office and building administrators meet to review the data and complete a report of results. The group designs a professional development/technical assistance support plan with timelines for implementation. This plan enables the school and district to correct areas of non-compliance and to strengthen promising programs and correct areas of weakness in order to improve services and programs for all students.
- **The SSS Report** The report summarizes the findings from the various data sources. The format of the report uses four divisions: Indicators, Findings, Documentation, and Support Plan. Indicators describe either performance or compliance. Findings can include a variety of some fourteen categories, from school improvement to the least restrictive environment. The documentation section of the report distinguishes the source of the finding. The support plan reflects the response to the described findings. The support plan describes the corrective action required by the district as well as ways that RIDE will assist the district to improve programs and services.

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1. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

INDICATOR	FINDINGS	DOCUMENTATION	SUPPORT PLAN	FOLLOW-UP FINDINGS
Performance	Smithfield is currently in the final year of it's five year district strategic plan which has nine action teams. The strategic plan is reviewed and revised on a yearly basis. The development of the strategic plan was facilitated by the Cambridge Group five years ago and they will be brought back to facilitate the next strategic plan.	District Presentation Interviews Document Review		
Performance	Smithfield has committed to revamping its curriculum. The district has rewritten the curriculum to the standards for all content areas with the exception of social studies which is in the process of finding a facilitator for the process.	District Presentation Interviews Document Review		
Performance	Smithfield had adopted new curriculum books and materials to mirror the revised curriculum. Smithfield also purchased technical assistance to go with the new curriculums. This was comprised of staff development by trained practitioners who had used the materials in their classroom.	District Presentation Interviews Document Review		

Performance	Smithfield Public Schools are in the formative stages of evaluating their state assessment data and breaking down that data to inform school-based instructional practices.	District Presentation Interviews Document Review	District-wide the Assistant Superintendent is meeting with each School Improvement Team (or appropriate subcommittee) to review how to assess and use state assessment data to improve outcomes for all students. Timeline: Ongoing	
Performance	The high school's School Improvement Team (SIT) is in the process of being reorganized. There are two co-chairs both of who are parents. One is a parent of a student with exceptionalities. There are seven subcommittees which report to the SIT and have distinct responsibilities. These are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Staff Development Committee - Assessment Committee - Graduation Requirements Committee - Policy/handbook Committee - Community Relations Committee - Communication Committee - Personalization Committee 	Interviews Document Review	The high school's School Improvement Team and subcommittees are actively meeting. Timeline: Ongoing	

Performance	The middle school has a functioning School Improvement Team. They are in the process of reviewing and restructuring their school improvement plan to effectively operationalize their tactics through setting time frames, responsibilities and identifying indicators of accomplishments. The 20 member team reflect a comprehensive representation of the middle school faculty in addition to parents of students in the general and special education continuum.	Interviews Document Review Staff Surveys	The middle school's School Improvement Team is actively meeting and reviewing their school improvement plan. Timeline: Ongoing	
Performance	At the elementary level there were functioning School Improvement Teams with active participation from special education. McCabe Elementary School is under new leadership and is currently reconstituting it's school improvement plan.	Interviews Document Review Staff Surveys		
Performance	Building principals are energetic and enthusiastic. They encourage shared decision-making and leadership among teachers and parents.	Observations Interviews Document Review District Presentation		

Performance	Staff reported strong support from the Director of Special Education and building principals for assisting them in providing quality services to students with exceptionalities and their integration into general education settings.	Interviews Observations Staff Surveys Document Review		
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2. SCHOOL CLIMATE

INDICATOR	FINDINGS	DOCUMENTATION	SUPPORT PLAN	FOLLOW-UP FINDINGS
Performance	The Smithfield Special Education Office has developed a policies and procedures manual that has copies of all district forms and a copy of the Rhode Island Regulations. Every principal and special education teacher and support staff has received a procedures manual.	Interviews Presentation Procedures Manual		
Performance	Schools in the district have a warm, welcoming, child-centered atmosphere. Staff are dedicated to providing a quality education to all students and embracing the "All Kids" agenda.	Interviews Observations Document Review		

Performance	Community outreach among the schools were varied. All schools facilitate public outreach efforts through Open House and School Report Night.	Interviews Document Review Staff Surveys		
Performance	District-wide there is a climate of collegiality with shared decision-making among staff and principals. There is also a natural flow of ongoing communication and collaboration among general and special education staff. Special education and general education approaches are entwined in the teaching and learning process. Co-teaching is the norm at most schools. The recent addition of a full-time resource teacher will enable Old County to expand their inclusionary collaborative efforts.	Interviews Observation		
Performance	To assure that all students at the middle school have access to a significant adult for support and direction, the guidance counselors follow their grade level students. For the students entire middle	Interview Document Review Observation		

	school experience the guidance counselors are active participants in their respective students grade level teams.			
Performance	Co-curricula faculty at the middle school have initiated regular meetings to address effective communication among disciplines, bridging curriculum topics and providing opportunities for shared professional dialogue with the special education staff.	Interviews Document Review		
Performance	The district has a crisis intervention manual which was published in 1995. It is unclear at the middle school how faculty responded as directed by the "at-risk" students management system.	Interviews Document Review	The middle school will review the district-wide crisis intervention manual on an annual basis. This will occur at the start of each school year. Timeline: October 2002	

3. TEACHING PRACTICES

INDICATOR	FINDINGS	DOCUMENTATION	SUPPORT PLAN	FOLLOW-UP FINDINGS
Performance	Standards based instruction is evident throughout the district. Rubrics are being used by teachers and students to guide their work and establish high expectations for all students.	Observations Staff Interviews Document Review		
Performance	Throughout the Smithfield Public Schools observational evidence of good teaching practices was seen in class visitations.	Interviews Observations		
Performance	Students are actively involved in "hands on" learning experiences through application of the new curriculums.	Staff Interviews Observation Document Review		
Performance	The middle school grade level team model affords faculty a comprehensive approach to creativity implementing integrated instruction. In addition, the grade level teams have common planning time daily.	Interview Observation Document Review		

Performance	At both the high school and the middle school, a Student Assistance Counselor is available to provide prevention, intervention and consultation services and supports for students, parents and faculty.	Document Review Interviews Observation		
Performance	The district is poised to begin designing innovative instruction that is tied to improved results for students. Teachers will need professional development support to recognize when to access outside expertise for children with disabilities who are not progressing and to close performance gaps.	Observation Record Review Parent Interview Staff Interview	The Smithfield Special Education Administrative Staff will provide professional development support on an as needed basis to support teachers in recognizing when to access outside expertise. Timeline: Ongoing	

4. EDUCATION PROGRAM ALTERNATIVES

INDICATOR	FINDINGS	DOCUMENTATION	SUPPORT PLAN	FOLLOW-UP FINDINGS
Performance	The high school has a Life Skills Program. They have a student operated Café where students take food orders, prepare food, and deliver food to students and teachers on Fridays.	Interviews Observation Document Review		

Performance	Students at LaPerche and The middle school are benefiting from advanced technology support for instructing through the school's model classroom initiative grant and specialized summer training accessed by the principal and two teachers. All students' benefit from a school-wide enrichment program. Old County also has a math enrichment program.	Observation Interviews Document Review		
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5. TEACEHR SUPPORT TEAMS

INDICATORS	FINDINGS	DOCUMENTATION	SUPPORT PLAN	FOLLOW-UP FINDINGS
Performance	At the elementary level, schools have very active Teacher Support Teams (TSTs) that meet regularly. Staff reported that the teams provided helpful strategies. The Teacher Support Teams also serve as 504 teams.	Interviews Document Review Staff Surveys		

Performance	The Teacher Support Teams at the middle school functions informally through grade level teams in their common planning time activities. Minutes are maintained and shared with the Assistant Principal for state level reporting. A structured process for facilitating Teacher Support Teams has not yet been established.	Interviews Document Review		
Performance	The high school is in the formative stages of establishing a Teacher Support Team. The current goal is to have one formed and operating by February 2002.	Interviews	Dates have been established in December 2001 to have professional development training on Teacher Support Teams. The Teacher Support Team is to be operationalized by February 2002. Timeline: February 2002	

6. FREE APPROPRIATE PUBLIC EDUCATION (FAPE)

INDICATOR	FINDINGS	DOCUMENTATION	SUPPORT PLAN	FOLLOW-UP FINDINGS
Performance	The school committee recently increased staff time devoted to child outreach and preschool services by extending the coordinator's role to a 4-day position.	Interviews Document Review District Presentation		
Compliance	Due to a staff vacancy of the school psychologist at the middle school, evaluations and re-evaluations are not current and beyond the mandated time frame.	Interview Record Reviews Data Analysis Meeting	The staff vacancy has been filled and all evaluations/reevaluations that were beyond the mandated timeframe have been completed. Assurances will be provided to the Office of Special Needs that compliance will be maintained. Timeline: January 2002	
Compliance	Compensatory speech and language services are not provided as required for students when the speech language pathologist is participating in IEP/Evaluation Team meetings at both Old County Elementary School and the middle school.	Interviews	The speech and language pathologist has built into her schedule, time to provide compensatory services. Special Education Director will provide assurances to the Office of Special Needs that compensatory speech and language services are provided. Timeline: January 2002	

7. FACILITIES

INDICATOR	FINDINGS	DOCUMENTATION	SUPPORT PLAN	FOLLOW-UP FINDINGS
Compliance	At William Winsor School, the resource teachers and a speech/language therapist occupy the same classroom although they have developed a school courtesy which limits their occupying the space at the same time. There are times when it is not appropriate for evaluations, meetings or service delivery. Confidentiality issues are a concern.	Interviews Observations	Teaches who are conducting evaluations, or meetings will continue to be provided alternate space if the classroom is used for service provision during their evaluation or meeting times. At no point will there be meetings or evaluations conducted concurrently with service provision taking place in the same classroom. Timeline: December 2001	
Compliance	At Old County Road, two resources teachers occupy the same classroom with there being a K-5 age span at times. The space is often over crowded and not appropriate for evaluations, meetings or service delivery.	Interviews Observations	Teaches who are conducting evaluations, or meetings will continue to be provided alternate space if the classroom is used for service provision during their evaluation or meeting times. At no point will there be meetings or evaluations conducted concurrently with service provision taking place in the same classroom. Timeline: December 2001	

Compliance	The high school psychologist currently uses the professional library room for working with students. If she is not able to use this space then she does not have an alternate confidential space to use while working with students.	Interviews Observation	Alternate space will be provided to assure that the psychologist has confidential space to use while working with students. Timeline: December 2001	
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8. EVALUATION

INDICATOR	FINDINGS	DOCUMENTATION	SUPPORT PLAN	FOLLOW-UP FINDINGS
Performance	The Special Education Department Chair at the high school does the educational testing for high school students with special needs.	Interviews Document Review		

9. INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLAN (IEP)/PROCEDURAL SAFEGUARDS

INDICATOR	FINDINGS	DOCUMENTATION	SUPPORT PLAN	FOLLOW-UP FINDINGS
Evaluation				
Compliance	No Evaluation Team report on file at the time of initial referral	Record Review SR5		
Performance	The following people were not at the Evaluation Team meeting:	a.) LEA representative, JD8, b.) JD 4, SR5 (special education teacher) c.) JD 3 (unknown/no report) d.) SW6, SR2, SR5, SR1 (general ed. teacher)		
Compliance	There is no documentation that parents are invited to or attend initial referral meetings.	Record review (all)	Policy and procedures for the documentation of parent invitation to initial referral meetings in the main files will be developed and implemented. The Smithfield Special Education Director will be responsible for ensuring appropriate documentation. Timeline: March 2002	
Compliance	No documentation of referral date.	SR4		

Individual Education Plan (IEP)				
Performance	Description of student's strengths and needs is inadequately written.	SW3		
Compliance	Incomplete progress section: Parent Interviews indicated that they were receiving progress reports but reports are missing from the main files.	a.) No documentation of progress towards IEP goals noted on IEP, JD5, JD8, SR5, SR3 b.) No documentation that parent was informed of progress JD2, JD3, JD5, JD8, SR2, SR3 c.) IEP goals does not included reason(s) for not meeting goal JD 2, JD3, JD 5, JD 8, SR3, SR8	Policy and procedures for the documentation of progress reports in the main files will be developed and implemented. The Smithfield Special Education Director will be responsible for ensuring appropriate documentation. Timeline: March 2002	
Compliance	No explanation for placement outside general education setting.	SR2, SR1		

Performance	Many high school students reported consistently attending their IEP meetings and their opinions and views listened to and incorporated into the design of their program.	Interviews Document Review		
Performance	District wide general education teachers have access to student's IEP's and are given a summary sheet of accommodations and modifications at the start of each school year.	Interviews Document Review		
Compliance	No location or service providers listed.	SW6		
Compliance	No documentation for the need for consideration of special factors.	SW1		
Compliance	Indication of whether student requires an alternate means of assessment.	JK 1, 3, 4, 6		
Compliance	Indication of need for supplementary aids and services.	JK 1, 2, 3, 4, 6		
Compliance	No observation	JK-3		

Compliance	Modification page attached to IEP	JK-8		
Performance	Student strengths and needs inadequately written	JK-4, SR2, SR5: Used language straight from the standards but lacked individual targets		
Performance	Students overwhelmingly have access to the general education curriculum through IEP goals that are based on district standards	Observation Staff Interview Parent Interview Record Review		
Performance	There is variable understanding among staff regarding how to address some components of the IEP (i.e., strengths/needs, annual goals, measurable criteria and location of services).	Record Review Staff Interview		
Performance	Well-written IEP with respect to present levels of performance, annual goals, and short-term objectives.	SR2 (OT)		

Compliance	Description, location, provider, frequency and duration of supplementary aides and services including accommodations and modification not adequately documented on IEP.	SR5		
Performance	At The high school substitutes booked for special education class coverage are utilized in other areas if there is a shortage of substitutes. The special education students are then placed in a study.	Interviews	Strategies to increase the substitute pool are occurring on an ongoing basis. Assurances will be provided to the Office of Special Needs that special education teachers are able to fully participate in their respective IEP meetings. Timeline: December 2001	
Performance	There is no telephone conferencing available in the room where the high school IEP meetings are held. Telephone conferencing is available in the administrator's office but these lines are not readily available.	Interviews Observation	The telephone conferencing is available in the high school administrative office and will be made readily available on an as needed basis. Timeline: December 2001	

10. LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT (LRE)

INDICATOR	FINDINGS	DOCUMENTATION	SUPPORT PLAN	FOLLOW-UP FINDINGS
Performance	<p>Smithfield Public Schools has a multitude of exemplary inclusionary opportunities for students. Some examples are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The high school has 13 co-taught (special education and general education content area teachers) • The middle school has an array of services and supports within each team as well as co-teaching within the teams. • At the elementary level all school have many integrated options. • At the preschool level there was an inclusionary preschool program 	<p>Interviews Observation</p>		

11. TRANSITION

INDICATORS	FINDINGS	DOCUMENTATION	SUPPORT PLAN	FOLLOW-UP FINDINGS
Performance	<p>The following information pertains to school-to-school transitions in the Smithfield Public Schools.</p> <p>High school: Each Spring there is a Parent Night where the incoming 9th graders visit The high school and explore courses of study. This is the only formalized opportunity for students/parents to visit the high school.</p> <p>Middle School: The middle school facilitates a formal transition process for students entering the 6th grade. The Principal and Guidance Counselors at The middle school visit incoming fifth grade classes. The Principal and Assistant Principal facilitate summer</p>	<p>Interviews Document Reviews Staff Surveys</p> <p>Interviews Document Reviews Staff Surveys</p>	<p>The high school is currently engaged on ongoing discussion, through the Personalization Subcommittee, of how to expand the transition program for incoming 9th graders. The expanded program will be implemented by the 2002-2003 school year.</p> <p>Timeline: Ongoing. Full implementation scheduled for 2002-2003 school year.</p>	

	<p>activities to ensure smooth transitions to the middle school.</p> <p>Elementary Level: In addition to the previously mentioned middle school activities the fifth grade and sixth grade teachers have regular structured meeting to discuss elementary and middle school curriculum and academic expectations.</p>	<p>Interviews Document Reviews Staff Surveys</p>		
Performance	<p>The following information pertains to the transition endeavors at the high school.</p> <p>A RITIE transition grant funded the development of a transition manual for the high school students. This guide outlines the transition</p>	<p>Interviews Observation Document Review Staff Surveys</p>	<p>There is ongoing discussion in regard to the Transition Coordinator's role and responsibilities. Clarification of the position's role and related responsibilities should be concluded by September 2002.</p> <p>Timeline: September 2002</p>	

Performance	<p>process and what steps/discussions should be taken in each grade.</p> <p>A RITIE transition grant funded the Real Life Fair where students prepared budgets and went through real life activities (i.e., simulations of apartment rentals, car purchases, bill payments, etc.). This involved both general and special education students.</p> <p>There is a contract with Goodwill, which provides job placement and job shadowing services for students in the Life Skills Program and students in the Students Transition Equally Prepared class. The Transition Coordinator teaches the Students Transition Equally Prepared class. (STEP I) class which focuses on specific transition activities which culminates in an end of the year paid job placement. These placements have resulted</p>	<p>Interviews Observation Document Review Staff Surveys</p>		
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	<p>in permanent part-time jobs and summer employment.</p> <p>There is no formalized transition class (e.g., STEP II) for students who are college bound. Follow-up for those students is with the Guidance Department.</p> <p>The Transition Coordinator initiates and follows referrals to outside agencies and any outside contracts (i.e., Goodwill, Association for the Blind, Tech Access, RI School for the Deaf, Office of Rehabilitative Services).</p> <p>The Transition Coordinator co-teaches a Service Learning Class. Students go into the community and volunteer at nonprofit and community service agencies. Career portfolios are developed.</p>			
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	The Transition Coordinator for the high school has a full teaching load in addition to her transition responsibilities.	Interviews Observation Document Review Staff Surveys		
Performance	Due to time constraints at the high school there is a lack of transition information between the special education department and the guidance department in terms of students transitioning to 2 or 4-year colleges.	Interviews (student and staff)	At the high school the special education department and the guidance department have begun discussions designed to improve communication between the two departments to better service students with exceptionalities who are planning to attend a 2 or 4-year college. Timeline: September 2002	
Performance	Students with IEP's who are college bound reported that they do not have enough information on the college application process and do not know where or to whom they to get that information.	Interviews	At The high school the special education department and the guidance department have begun discussions designed to improve communication between the two departments to better service students with exceptionalities who are planning to attend a 2 or 4-year college. Timeline: September 2002	

12. PARENT INVOLVMENT

	FINDINGS	DOCUMENTATION	SUPPORT PLAN	FOLLOW-UP FINDINGS
Performance	The Local Advisory Council (LAC) is a functioning group. Their priorities are parent outreach and to plan workshop on topics that parents are interested in. The next planned LAC activity is a workshop on how to plan wills and trusts for children with exceptionalities. The current LAC chair is new to the position and reports a positive working relationship with the special education director.	Interviews Document Review		
Performance	Notices of Local Special Education Advisory Committee are sent home with individual students and the meeting schedule is posted at the school. For students in out-of-district placement they are mailed home. Teachers reported that	Interviews Record Reviews	Informational notices are sent to each school outlining Local Advisory Council meetings and upcoming workshops. Timeline: Ongoing	

	they have limited knowledge of the Local Special Education Advisory Committee.			
Performance	<p>There is a range of school based parent involvement throughout the Smithfield Public Schools. Some examples are as follows:</p> <p><u>High School</u>: Parent groups plan and implement a variety of school-based activities and events.</p> <p><u>Middle Level</u>: The parent Council Booster Club does a variety of creative approaches to fund raising and program development.</p> <p><u>Elementary Level</u>: All elementary schools have active PTO's and parent participation on School Improvement Teams. Some elementary schools provide multiple opportunities for parent involvement in extra curricular and academic enrichment programs.</p>	<p>Observations Interviews Document Review Staff Surveys</p>		

Performance	Parents reported being involved in the design of their child's IEP program.	Interviews		
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13. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

	FINDINGS	DOCUMENTATION	SUPPORT PLAN	FOLLOW-UP FINDINGS
Performance	Smithfield Public Schools have three professional development days prior to the start of school. All special educators benefited from a district professional development day for all special education staff, which provided clarification and guidelines for updated special education policies and procedures and opportunities for collegial networking.	Interviews Document review Staff Surveys		
Performance	Teachers can request approval via the principal to attend outside professional development activities. There is Article 31 money at the school level and grant money at the district level to support individual	Presentation Interviews		

	professional development.			
Performance	At The high school the staff development subcommittee is charged with overseeing the expenditure of Article 31 monies and the awareness of professional development programs for all faculty.	Interviews Document Reviews	The high school has begun discussions on capacity building for increased professional development activities (i.e., technology). Timeline: Ongoing	
Performance	In the Smithfield Public Schools Professional Development has occurred in the following areas: -504 Plans -Smithfield Special Education Policies and Procedures -Assistive Technology -Assessment Workshops -Computer Technology -Autism Project -Reading Strategies -English, Mathematics and Science technical assistance -Early Childhood Seminar Series -Looking at Student Work	Interviews Document Review SALT Surveys		

Performance	<p>Additional Professional development n the Smithfield Public Schools is wanted in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Differentiated Instruction -Teacher Support Teams -Instructional Strategies -Looking at Student Work Strategies -Assessment and Evaluation -Teacher Assistant Training -Extended School Year for both teachers and parents. - Positive Behavioral Supports - Confidentiality issues for general educators - 504 Implementation 	Interviews SALT Surveys		
Performance	Some elementary principals were not well versed in suspension of students with disabilities and the process requirements of functional behavioral assessments.	Interviews	<p>The special education administrative staff will provide technical assistance on an as needed basis to elementary principals on suspension of student with disabilities and functional behavioral assessments.</p> <p>Timeline: Ongoing</p>	

Performance	Teachers benefit from job performance embedded professional development through ongoing collegial collaboration among general education and special education faculty.	Observations Interviews		
Performance	The Special Education Director supports special education staff determining their own learning needs and accessing requested professional development.	Interviews		
Performance	The high school has a relationship with Bryant College, Rhode Island College, and the Community College of Rhode Island (CCRI). Rhode Island College and CCRI have an Early Enrollment Program where students take classes at the college and earn college credits. Students can also take classes at Bryant College and earn college credits through the Finance Academy. Both general education and special	Interviews Document Review		

	education students participate in these programs.			
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